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Major News Releases and Speeches

Nov. 19 - Nov. 26, 1982

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Testimony

U.S. Department of Agriculture • Office of Governmental and Public Affairs

Statement by Under Secretary of Agriculture Seeley G. Lodwick at the 82nd Session of the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, Rome, Italy, Nov. 21, 1982

Mr. Director General, my fellow delegates and friends. It is both an honor and a pleasure to address such a distinguished audience of world agricultural leaders. In working with officials from other countries and FAO, I have often been troubled by the fact that we rarely have a chance to meet face to face. Instead we try to resolve important agricultural issues by shuttling messages back and forth over distances of thousands of miles. This makes it difficult for us to appreciate each other's needs and goals. A meeting like this can overcome that problem and allow us to share our thoughts in a more personal way.

It has been nearly four decades since 44 nations met in Hot Springs, Va., to lay the groundwork for the Food and Agricultural Organization we know today. And it seems appropriate for us to take stock of our efforts so far and our aspirations for the future. When this organization first met in Quebec in 1945, suffering from famine and malnutrition were widespread—not only in the poorer nations of the world but also in the industrialized nations decimated by war. Since then, we have seen nations once critically dependent on food aid break through the barriers to self-reliance; we have seen agricultural trade revive to reach record levels; we have seen agriculture transformed by research and technology so we can now realistically aspire to end hunger and malnutrition in every part of the world.

Much progress has been made and a great deal of it can be attributed to the untiring efforts of FAO. You and your predecessors are to be commended for the vision and determination you have brought to this organization's programs. But there is still much work to do. The reports we have heard here on the food situation in Africa only highlight the need for even more progress.

Some of the issues we face here today are similar to those we faced when FAO was founded. All the purposes of FAO remain the same: improving nutrition and the standards of living in member nations,

fostering rural development and making the production and distribution of food more efficient. But the dimensions and complexities of the problems have changed.

Hunger and malnutrition still afflict many nations, but now we are also confronted with other problems that complicate our task. Inflation has eaten into the budgets of our governments and of international organizations, a dangerous drift toward protectionism is undermining agricultural trade and development and a worldwide recession has reduced earnings for all and threatens our efforts to strengthen agriculture in the developing world.

I would like to share the views of the United States on these issues with you and offer some ideas on how we can work together to address them. In doing so, I will touch briefly on the United States' assistance to developing nations, our domestic and international agricultural policies, world food security, and FAO's programs and budget.

The productivity of U.S. farmers has given the United States unparalleled agricultural abundance. But we have not enjoyed our abundance with little regard for the rest of the world. We have always recognized the obligation to share our agricultural productivity with those who are less fortunate.

Since 1954, the United States has carried out the world's largest bilateral food aid program under Public Law 480. Begun by President Eisenhower, the program is now aptly called "Food for Peace. . . Food aid through this program has already topped \$40 billion, more than the aid given by all other donor nations combined. In addition to this ongoing program, the Reagan Administration began a new initiative just last month. We are now making U.S. government stocks of butter, cheese and nonfat dry milk available for donation to other governments and public and private organizations that work to assist needy people in other nations.

But our bilateral programs are only part of the picture. We have also given strong support to multinational organizations like the World Food Program and UNICEF and to voluntary organizations.

As evidence of this, Secretary Block announced a record pledge to the World Food Program in October in honor of FAO's commemoration of World Food Day. This pledge of \$250 million for 1983-84 represents a substantial increase of 14 percent over our pledge

for 1981-82. It further demonstrates our confidence in the World Food Program and its leadership.

Our domestic agricultural policy continues to emphasize production within a free market economy. But low crop prices and reduced demand for U.S. exports have necessitated an acreage reduction program aimed at raising the prices our farmers receive for major commodities. With record stocks already on hand, the issue becomes insuring the long-term productivity of U.S. agriculture by acting to support prices.

We must see to it that agriculture is profitable in the United States if U.S. farmers are to help meet the world's growing demand for food in the decades ahead.

The United States has placed high priority on agricultural research and we are promoting new measures to preserve our soil and water resources. USDA has worked both bilaterally and with international organizations like FAO to share the benefits of U.S. agricultural research and technical expertise. The department now has technical assistance projects in 76 countries and some 239 cooperative international research projects.

Working with FAO and AID, USDA has provided training for over 70,000 agriculturalists from developing countries. And we now have scientific and technical exchanges with more than 30 developing and developed nations to share knowledge and experience in agriculture.

Our domestic research and conservation efforts will help guarantee our continued role as the largest supplier of food for world markets. At the same time, we stand ready to share our know-how with other nations to help them improve their productivity and protect their agricultural resources.

U.S. domestic agricultural production and policies are inextricably linked to international trade. Farmers in the United States now export about half of their soybean production, two-thirds of their wheat and one-third of their corn. The situation is similar for a number of other commodities. The simple fact is that U.S. farmers must export because they now depend on overseas sales for a fourth of their income.

The United States is aggressively pursuing international trade policies in agriculture that will be in the long-run interests of all nations—developed and developing. One step taken recently should be

of particular benefit to developing countries. It is a new blended credit program announced by Secretary Block.

This program is directed primarily at helping developing countries to purchase more of the agricultural products they need by lowering interest costs. The program will eventually make \$1.5 billion available to lower these costs, and should increase the ability of developing nations to buy U.S. food for current use or for building their reserves.

We are also working on the broader goal of liberalizing world trade in agriculture. I will be taking part in the GATT ministerials in Geneva later this week. The United States has taken the position that agricultural trade must fall under the same GATT rules that govern trade in manufactured products. Export subsidies and trade barriers must become the exception and not the rule in international agricultural trade. They should be a last resort, used only when absolutely necessary.

The developing nations share our concern about how the routine use of export subsidies and trade barriers disrupts world agricultural trade and lessens the incentives for production.

We believe that more liberalized trade in agricultural commodities is essential both for world food security and to the economic well-being of developing nations. Certainly the United States has a vested interest in removing barriers to world trade. But we are not the only ones who can profit from freer trade in agriculture. And we do not view agricultural trade as a one-way street. The United States is the single largest market for the agricultural exports of the developing countries in spite of our large domestic production.

Freer agricultural trade is essential to world food security, because without it we cannot encourage farmers to produce at a level to meet the world's food needs. The United States has already done more than its share to contribute to world food security. We are firmly committed to FAO's plan of action on world food security. The United States' grain reserves, now at the highest level in history, assure availability for our food aid commitments as well as our regular commercial customers.

But the U.S. stocks of grains for 1982/83 are in our opinion excessive and are far too high a percentage of the world's cereals stocks. Most of the other large grain producing and exporting countries

have taken little, if any, action to build stocks during this period of excessive supplies.

Concrete action by these countries is warranted in view of their statements of support for FAO's plan of action for food security.

The United States strongly urges other governments to develop and maintain their own national grain reserve programs. We are making funds available through the U.S. Agency for International Development to help enhance food security in the developing countries. I would like to take a few moments to comment on some of FAO's ongoing programs.

The director general should be commended for the follow-up activities in support of the program of action adopted at the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development. As the nations involved work with FAO on this program, we urge them to maximize the role of the private sector in both rural development and improving the distribution of food and agricultural products.

As President Reagan noted at Cancun last year, the tremendous potential of private enterprise has often been overlooked in development programs. Once private enterprise has been drawn into the picture, it remains a valuable resource.

President Reagan's offer to send agricultural task forces to help other nations with agricultural development fully reflects the U.S. emphasis on food and agriculture in its development efforts. Presidential Agricultural Task Forces from the United States have already visited Peru, Thailand, Honduras, Venezuela and Liberia.

In another bilateral development program, the United States has begun to move quickly to distribute the special and additional funds Congress has approved for our Caribbean Basin Initiative. A \$350 million package of assistance has already been largely distributed and we expect Congress to take up the trade aspects of the program soon.

FAO has continued to do an excellent job of collecting and disseminating worldwide data on food and agriculture and maintaining an early warning system. The United States finds these activities particularly helpful in its own economic analyses of world agricultural conditions.

We are also pleased by FAO's activities in animal and plant pest control and its collaboration with other international agencies in Africa

and Latin America in this effort. We welcome the greater emphasis FAO has given to more effective management of forest resources and hope to see the role forestry plays in FAO's programs expand even further in the future.

There is a growing appreciation of the vital role that forest conservation plays in agricultural development, particularly in the tropical countries. Better forest management will not only improve agricultural production, it can create jobs, build fuelwood supplies and help contain the spread of serious erosion. The World Food Program has made a significant contribution in the forestry area with its work on reforestation in developing countries.

There can be no question of the United States' continuing support for the essential programs being carried out by FAO. But at the same time the present economic crisis in the industrialized countries has begun to limit the resources available for many worthwhile tasks. The United States has made substantial cuts in domestic programs in an effort to rebuild its economy on a firmer, noninflationary base. We do not want to see another spiral of inflation. Inflated dollars would simply buy less of what the American people need at home and only devalue the funds we contribute to international activities.

We agree with Director General Saouma that FAO must also work hard to control expenditures and see that its funds are well spent. He recently raised this issue at the FAO Regional Conferences for Latin America and Africa. And we appreciate the steps he has already taken. All of us must work together to help FAO focus its resources on high priority areas and control administrative costs so its work will continue to be as effective as possible.

Great strides have been made in agricultural development in many nations—India, Pakistan, Brazil, the Philippines, Niger—to name only a few. Much of the credit for this can be taken by FAO. But there is much more to do before we can lay claim to winning the battle against hunger and malnutrition. If we are ever to make that claim, we must wage the battle together. We must appreciate each other's strengths and limitations. In that way, the progress we have made so far can be carried on and we can set a course for even greater achievements in the future.

News Releases

U.S. Department of Agriculture • Office of Governmental and Public Affairs

CROP INSURANCE TO BE EXTENDED AT USDA

WASHINGTON, Nov.22—Crop insurance offered farmers by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Federal Crop Insurance Corporation will be extended to more crops in more counties for the 1983 crop year.

Merritt W. Sprague, manager of the USDA crop insurance agency, said today the corporation board of directors has approved 823 additional county programs for 1983 crops. A county program is the authority to sell crop insurance for one crop in one county.

"Our agency currently insures 28 crops in 14,498 county programs across the nation," Sprague said. "The additional county programs announced today are part of our continuing expansion program."

Crops included in the additional county programs for 1983 are soybeans in 285 counties, oats in 384, potatoes in 44, peanuts in 33, tobacco in 70, peaches in 4 and grapes in 3.

Sprague also announced that the USDA agency will prepare regulations for covering hybrid seed crops in the 1983 crop year. He said the plan will insure seed for producers who are under contract to processors. The new rules will be published in the Federal Register for public comment and review before going into effect.

"These needed programs will allow producers to obtain the risk management protection necessary in today's economic situation. Ultimately, insurance protection against unavoidable loss will be available to nearly every crop producer in the nation," said Sprague.

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USDA INCREASES FEES FOR MEAT GRADING SERVICES

WASHINGTON, Nov. 22—On Nov. 28, the U.S. Department of Agriculture will raise its grading and certification fees to meatpackers and processors by \$1.80 an hour for regular-time work.

Thomas H. Porter, an official of USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, said the increase is needed because of pay raises to federal workers in October; new program costs for medicare coverage beginning Jan. 1; and higher charges by USDA's National Finance Center for processing meat grading and acceptance certificates.

Porter said the costs of conducting the service also are affected by the need to pay back pay claims granted to meat graders under the Fair Labor Standards Act.

Porter said the increased fees will be put into effect on an interim basis without a prior proposal because of the immediate need to collect more revenue to cover costs of the services.

Fees will be increased from \$23.20 to \$25 per hour for work performed between 6 a.m. and 6 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Grading and certification work performed on Saturday, Sunday and between 6 p.m. and 6 a.m. Monday through Friday will increase from \$28.20 to \$30 per hour. Fees for work done on legal holidays will be increased from \$46.40 to \$50 per hour.

Meat grading and certification are voluntary services provided to meatpackers and processors for a fee, Porter said. Fees for these services must be about equal to the cost of providing the service.

Comments on the increase may be sent until Jan. 28, to: Agricultural Marketing Service, Room 2-M Annex, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.

Notice of the interim rule will be published in the Nov. 23 Federal Register, available at most public libraries.

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OCTOBER FOOD PRICES DECLINE

WASHINGTON, Nov. 23—The consumer price index released today indicates retail food prices fell 0.2 percent in October (before seasonal adjustment), according to Assistant Secretary of Agriculture William Leshner.

"Declining food prices reflect large supplies of many food commodities, weak consumer demand and small changes in food marketing costs," he said.

Prices for food bought in grocery stores fell 0.4 percent in October, the third consecutive monthly decline. Prices for food purchased away from home were up 0.3 percent, the smallest rise this year, Leshner said.

October food prices were 3.4 percent higher than a year earlier. This reflects 2.7 percent higher prices for grocery store food prices and 4.9 percent higher prices for food away from home. In contrast, prices for nonfood items have risen 5.4 percent over the past year, Leshner said.

Retail prices for fruits and vegetables were important factors pushing last month's food CPI down. Fresh fruit prices declined 3.6 percent in October as seasonally increased supplies and lower prices of apples and bananas offset higher prices of oranges. Prices for fresh vegetables fell for the fourth consecutive month as a 10.5 percent decrease in potato prices offset higher prices for tomatoes and lettuce.

Retail meat prices were down 1.3 percent in October, reflecting increased supplies. Prices for beef and veal fell for the fourth consecutive month and are now 1 percent less than a year ago. Retail pork prices were up 0.3 percent, the smallest monthly rise since last March. Also, poultry prices fell 0.4 percent in October.

Nonalcoholic beverage prices were up 0.8 percent in October, reflecting sharp increases in soft drink prices. Prices for most other foods showed little or no change. Egg prices rose 0.3 percent. Prices for dairy products and fats and oils were unchanged. Prices for cereals and bakery products rose 0.1 percent and prices for sugar and sweets were down 0.2 percent.

The 1982 rise in the food CPI will be the smallest since 1976 and will also be lower than the general inflation rate for the fourth consecutive year. Food price increases this year have been limited by a small rise in the farm value of food and a slowing of food marketing cost increases.

In 1983, retail food price rises will continue to be moderate. A smaller overall inflation rate will again be reflected in food marketing costs, particularly in the labor component. The farm value of food is expected to be up 1 to 4 percent, reflecting prospects for only a modest increase in consumer demand.

October Retail Food Prices, Percent Change for Selected Items

Items	September to October		
	Not seasonally adjusted	Seasonally adjusted	October 1981 to October 1982
All food	-0.2	0.2	3.4
Food away from home	0.3	0.5	4.9
Food at home	-0.4	0.1	2.7
Meats	-1.3	-1.0	4.7
Beef and veal	-2.5	-1.7	-1.0
Pork	0.3	0.3	16.5
Other meats	0.0	0.0	4.1
Poultry	-0.4	0.2	-0.6
Eggs	0.3	3.7	-5.4
Fish and seafood	-0.6	-0.5	1.7
Dairy products	0.0	*	1.0
Fats and oils	0.0	*	-3.8
Cereals and bakery prods.	0.1	*	3.6
Fruits and vegetables	-1.2	0.4	2.0
Nonalcoholic beverages	0.8	1.2	3.1
Sugar and sweets	-0.2	*	3.0
Other prepared foods	0.2	0.4	3.8

* A seasonally adjusted index is not available for these items.

#

USDA REMOVES RESTRICTIONS FOR FUNGUS DISEASE OF EVERGREENS

WASHINGTON, Nov. 23—U.S. Department of Agriculture officials have removed emergency regulations on the European strain of Scleroderris canker—a fungus disease of pines and other evergreens—in parts of New Hampshire, New York and Vermont.

Richard Cowden, a plant protection official with USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, said the action is necessary because there are no federal funds to enforce the quarantine restrictions. The European strain is considered more destructive than other strains of Scleroderris canker.

Cowden said federal regulations previously restricted the interstate movement of nursery stock, Christmas trees, wreaths, branches and twigs of susceptible trees from designated areas. Included were all species of the genera Larix—larch; Pinus—pines; and Picea—spruce; and the species Pseudotsuga mensiesii—Douglas fir.

The regulations had affected all or parts of Coos County, N. H.; Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Fulton, Hamilton, Herkimer, Jefferson, Lewis, Oneida, Oswego, St. Lawrence and Warren Counties, N.Y.; and Addison, Caledonia, Chittenden, Essex, Franklin, Lamoille, Orange, Orleans and Washington Counties, Vt.

Cowden said continued protection against the spread of Scleroderris canker will be the responsibility of the states. He said control or quarantine measures are being taken by Maine, New Hampshire, New York and Vermont.

This action will be effective Dec. 22.

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FIR FROM VERMONT TO BE CAPITOL CHRISTMAS TREE

WASHINGTON, Nov. 23—A 35-year-old, 50-foot balsam fir from the Riley Bostwick Wildlife Management Area within the Green Mountain National Forest, near Rochester, Vt., will be the 1982 Capitol Christmas Tree.

R. Max Peterson, chief of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service, said today the tree will arrive in Washington and be placed on the west front lawn of the Capitol at 10 a.m. Dec. 7. Sponsors of the tree are the Vermont Fish and Game Department and the USDA.

Peterson said this is the twelfth Capitol Christmas Tree the Forest Service has helped to provide.

Speaker of the House Thomas P. O'Neill, Jr., and his grandchildren will conduct this year's special tree-lighting ceremony at 5 p.m. Dec. 15, and members of the Vermont Congressional delegation will attend.

Nearly 10,000 lights and ornaments will adorn the tree. The office of the Architect of Capitol is in charge of decorating the tree and the lighting ceremony.

The public is invited to attend the ceremony, which will include a variety of seasonal music from the Murrah High School Singers from Jackson, Miss.. and a section of the Air Force Band. The tree will be lighted each day between 5 p.m. and 10 p.m. until Jan. 2.

This year's tree is the second Capitol Christmas Tree to come from Vermont. The first was in 1980. The tree will be cut with a two-man cross-cut saw on Dec. 4, by Vermont Gov. Richard Snelling and Rochester native Richard Curtis.

The tree was planted and groomed to become a Christmas tree by the late Riley Bostwick of Rochester. He once owned the land which is now the Bostwick Wildlife Management Area.

Peterson said the tree is a gift to the nation from the people of Vermont, symbolizing the "hope, peace and goodwill of the holiday season." The labor, equipment and transportation required to get the tree to Washington were donated by many individuals and organizations.

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BRAZIL, PORTUGAL APPROVED FOR BLENDED EXPORT CREDITS

WASHINGTON, Nov. 23—Secretary of Agriculture John R. Block today announced blended credit packages have been approved for the sale of U.S. wheat to Brazil and cotton to Portugal.

"These credit packages will open the way for the sale by private U.S. exporters of nearly \$65 million of U.S. agricultural commodities that would not have been sold without the new credit program," Block said.

Under the program, which was announced Oct. 20, interest-free direct government export credits are blended with government-guaranteed private credits to produce a lower interest rate. A total of

\$100 million of direct credit and \$400 million in credit guarantees has been authorized for the first year of the 3-year, \$1.5 billion program. With the two credit packages announced today, direct credit allocations under the program now stand at \$88 million and credit guarantees at \$352 million for a total of \$440 million.

The Brazilian credit package of \$12 million of direct credit and \$48 million of credit guarantees was approved for the sale of 375,000 tons of wheat.

"Each of these sales represents an increase over previously estimated import totals from the United States," Block said. The U.S. share of Brazilian wheat imports, which are estimated to total 4 million tons in marketing year 1982/83, will rise from 1.8 million tons to 2.2 million tons.

The package for Portugal makes available \$1 million of direct credit and \$4 million of guaranteed credit for the purchase of 3,000 metric tons—or 13,800 bales—of U.S. cotton.

"This blended credit program will improve the long-term prospects for U.S. cotton considerably, with only modest government outlays and very little financial risk," Block said.

Portugal's cotton imports this year are estimated to total 130,000 metric tons—596,700 bales—of which the United States was originally expected to supply 10 percent, according to Block. The blended credit program should boost the U.S. market share to 12 percent.

Blended credit proposals from several more countries remain under consideration, Block said, with decisions on approval due soon.

#

HUNGER AHEAD? WHEN? COMPUTER MAY SEE LONG-TERM PRICE OF SOIL EROSION

WASHINGTON, Nov. 24—Erosion still sends rich topsoil down our rivers by the millions of tons, weakening the land's ability to grow food. Yet, the nation's population is projected to reach 309 million by the year 2050.

Are we on a collision course. Will the land some day be so crippled that American farmers won't be able to feed people?

If so, when?

Computers may help us find the answer.

Scientists don't need computers to tell them about the on-going ravages of soil erosion. Their own research findings at the U.S. Department of Agriculture show about 5.4 million tons of topsoil lost to erosion each year. Much of that soil comes from farms.

When it rains, the rivers tell the story.

Enough soil goes down the Mississippi River in a year to build an island one mile long, a quarter mile wide and 200 feet high. In eastern Washington, the Palouse River carries away about 3 million tons of fertile topsoil each June. Other streams take their shares.

Over the years, most of the research on erosion's impact on soil productivity has been done on individual projects. It often takes years, sometimes decades, to complete projects, and the findings are scattered bits of a big picture.

It's hard to predict what all this really means because scientists don't have a comprehensive view of crop-growing obstacles that may arise throughout the country as a result of topsoil losses over the long haul.

Now, a new computerized analysis system created by a USDA team is expected to overcome that problem. The system will put the fragmented pieces of the puzzle together and try to forecast how soil erosion may affect the land's ability to grow food and fiber in the years ahead, even centuries from now.

Scientists call the new computer model "EPIC," short for Erosion-Productivity Impact Calculator.

When completed, EPIC will bring together what researchers know about hydrology, erosion and sedimentation, livestock grazing, nutrient cycling, crop growth, tillage, soil properties, climate, pesticides, insects, diseases and economics.

Scientists from USDA's Agricultural Research Service, Economic Research Service and Soil Conservation Service are helping set up EPIC. Team researchers come from several disciplines—soil scientists, hydrologic engineers, soil physicists and plant physiologists.

After more than a year of analyzing and selecting data for a "supermodel," the team now is fine tuning EPIC's forecasting ability.

"Years of painstakingly difficult data gathering finally may pay off in providing new insights into how we can protect soil," said Terry B. Kinney, Jr., administrator of USDA's Agricultural Research Service.

"Once EPIC establishes the relationship between erosion and productivity, we will be better able to put a dollar value on the loss of U.S. soil," he said. "We also will be able to select management strategies to maximize long-term crop production."

EPIC will provide information on the current status of soil and water resources in the United States—as required by the Soil and Water Resources Conservation Act of 1977. This is scheduled to be done by 1985.

Kinney said EPIC supports Secretary of Agriculture John R. Block's priority of determining why the nation's rate of soil productivity has leveled off in recent years.

"EPIC will show what we can do to remedy the problem before it's too late," Block said.

Jimmy R. Williams, hydraulic engineer at USDA's Grasslands, Soil and Water Research Laboratory, Temple, Texas, said EPIC will assemble much of what scientists know about weather, crops, tillage and soil characteristics and how these factors will affect U.S. crop production.

EPIC has been run on 150 test sites throughout the continental United States and 13 sites in Hawaii. With testing 50 percent complete, results are promising, Williams said. The system has simulated erosion, crop yields and related processes, and the results generally agree closely with measured data.

"The main purpose for testing this system up to this point has been to determine how reliably the model predicts productivity under a variety of conditions," Williams said. "So far, EPIC suggests that in some areas where erosion rates are high and subsoils are poor, crop yields were reduced as much as 40 percent in 50 years."

Food supplies in other countries, as well as America, are at stake, too, said Kenneth G. Renard, research leader at USDA's Southwest Rangeland Watershed Research Center, Tucson, Ariz., and national technical advisor for soil erosion and productivity.

Renard said the scientists hope EPIC will provide fundamental productivity research now to make sure U.S. farmers can continue to

produce food and fiber for Americans as well as the starving millions of the world—while maintaining the nation's natural resources and ensuring their conservation for future generations.

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FOREST SERVICE AND CLUB JOIN IN NATIONAL VOLUNTEER PROJECT

WASHINGTON, Nov. 24—The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service and the Appalachian Mountain Club are cooperating in a national program to increase volunteer efforts in recreation management.

In announcing the effort today, Secretary of Agriculture John R. Block said the project will enable the club, headquartered in Boston, to share its 106 years in cooperative recreation management experience with other organizations nationwide.

"The Appalachian Mountain Club is a tremendous example of this nation's spirit of volunteerism," Block said.

"This 25,000-member association has an outstanding record of volunteer work with the White Mountain National Forest in New Hampshire. Now, the club will expand its efforts to other areas."

A grant from the Richard King Mellon Foundation is making the three-year project possible.

The program aims to produce at least six long-term partnerships among land management agencies, volunteer groups, states and others, to build and maintain trails, maintain campgrounds and do other recreation work.

Block said the Forest Service, the nation's largest supplier of outdoor recreation, will provide many of the work opportunities. As a result, the agency expects to significantly increase the participation of volunteers in recreation management programs on lands administered by the Forest Service and other government units.

Under the agreement, the agency will provide federal liaison, staff expertise and other support.

Block said the national volunteer program already is producing results. During a recent weekend, he said, almost 200 people from

various volunteer groups and government agencies cleaned up and rehabilitated an open area owned by the city of Albuquerque, N.M. The new city park will provide hiking, picnicking and other recreational activities, as well as access to trails in the adjacent Cibola National Forest.

Other partnerships, many involving trail work, are being set up in parts of Florida, Pennsylvania, Washington, Colorado and California. The Forest Service manages a considerable amount of recreation land in each of these areas.

"We look forward to working with the Appalachian Mountain Club to build solid partnerships between the government and the public," Block said. "Besides allowing us to do work that otherwise couldn't be done, the national volunteer program will help promote better local stewardship of lands used by the public, for the benefit of all."

#

USDA ISSUES PROTECTION CERTIFICATES FOR 15 NEW PLANT VARIETIES

WASHINGTON, Nov. 24—The U.S. Department of Agriculture has issued certificates of protection for new varieties of tomato, cayenne pepper, garden bean, lima bean, cauliflower, pea, oat, soybean, watermelon and common wheat.

Thomas H. Porter, an official with USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service here, said the tomato and cayenne pepper varieties are the first among those kind of plants to be protected.

Developers of the new varieties will have the exclusive right to reproduce their products in the United States for 18 years. USDA grants certificates of protection after reviewing the breeders' records and claims that each new variety is novel, uniform and stable.

W. Atlee Burpee Co., Warminster, Pa., received protection for "Super Beefsteak VFN" tomato, a tomato similar to the beefsteak tomato except that it is resistant to verticillium and fusarium wilt and root nematode.

Tommy Bolack of Farmington, N.M., received a protection certificate for "Orange Cayenne," a pepper similar to the red cayenne except for its color.

Coffey Seed Co., Plainview, Texas, was protected for Chubby Gray and Crimson Diamond watermelon. Other developers given certificates were. Coker's Pedigreed Seed Co., Hartsville, S.C., for Mesquite and Big Mac oat; Pillsbury Green Giant, Le Sueur, Minn., for 260 and 265 pea; North American Plant Breeders, Mission, Kan., for HP 2530 and AP 230 soybean; and Northrup King Co., Minneapolis, Minn., for Klasic common wheat.

Also issued certificates were: Royal Sluis, B.V. Enkhuizen, The Netherlands, for Flamata garden bean; Koninklijke Zaadteelt en Zaadhandel Sluis and Groot B.V. Enkhuizen, The Netherlands, for White Summer cauliflower; L.D. Maffei Seed Co., Inc., Newman, Calif., for Maffei 15 lima bean and Iowa Agriculture and Home Economics Experiment Station, Ames, Iowa, for Vinton 81 soybean.

The oat, pea, pepper and Vinton 81 soybean varieties will be sold by variety name only as a class of certified seed.

USDA grants plant variety protection to citizens of other countries based on reciprocity agreements between the U.S. and those countries.

The plant variety protection program is administered by USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service and provides marketing protection to developers of new and distinctive seed-reproduced plants ranging from farm crops to flowers.

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USDA TO HOST ROUNDTABLE ON BEEF GRADE STANDARDS

WASHINGTON, Nov. 24—Future needs for beef grade standards will be discussed at a roundtable program hosted by the U.S. Department of Agriculture on Jan. 18 and 19 in Arlington, Va.

Vern F. Highley, administrator of USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, said the program will bring together for informal discussion major organizations representing all segments of the beef industry

and consumers. The Agricultural Marketing Service administers the beef grading program.

"We feel that this informal discussion is desirable," he said, "because of the wide divergence of views expressed on USDA's 1981 proposal to change official beef grade standards. An open and continuing dialogue between USDA and those public groups affected by beef grades should help us to maintain a dynamic beef grading system acceptable to all."

USDA proposed a change in official grade standards for beef in December 1981. In September, based on findings from hearings and an analysis of written comments, USDA withdrew the proposal.

The beef grades roundtable will be held at the Twin Bridges Marriott, U.S.#1 and I-395, Arlington, Va. Sessions are open to the public and will begin each day at 9 a.m.

For further information, contact USDA, AMS, Room 2-M, 14th and Independence Ave. S.W., Washington D.C. 20250; telephone: (202) 447-4727.

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REVIEW OF NATIONAL FOREST LANDS BEGINS

WASHINGTON, Nov. 24—About 140 million acres of national forest system land now are being reviewed to identify which areas should be studied more intensively to determine their suitability for retention or disposal.

Secretary of Agriculture John R. Block said today the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service is conducting the review as part of President Reagan's asset management program.

The asset management program was announced by President Reagan in February to identify federal lands and other real properties that are no longer needed for achieving the objectives of the federal agencies which have jurisdiction over those properties.

The goal of the program, Block said, is to improve the management of federal lands and lower the national debt by selling unneeded federal lands.

In August, Block announced that the Forest Service was planning to conduct a review of its holdings as part of the asset management

program. At that time, he said that about 140 million acres of the 191 million acre National Forest System would be reviewed quickly to identify those lands that would be later studied more intensively to determine their suitability for retention or possible sale.

"We have identified 51 million acres of national forest system lands which will not be sold," Block said. "We expect the vast majority of the remaining lands now being reviewed to be retained also, after the review and study."

The review, scheduled to be completed by the end of January, is expected to identify approximately 15 to 18 million acres which will be intensively studied at a later date to determine their suitability for retention or disposal through sales. Block said public involvement will play a key role in the completion of the intensive studies.

Block stressed that the USDA does not currently have statutory authority to sell most National Forest System lands. He said the department will be submitting proposed legislation to implement the asset management program shortly after the new Congress convenes in January. Block said lands most likely to be considered for possible sale include: Lands which could provide significant public benefits if sold and for which public support for such sales already exists; lands needed for expansion of communities adjacent to the national forests; lands currently being used for a single purpose under a special use permit and for which no other public use is foreseen; scattered tracts where a change in ownership could make an important contribution to nonfederal purposes; and tracts that are physically separated from the main body of a national forest.

Meanwhile, Block said, 60,000 acres of national forest system land were identified for possible sale in August. These lands are the only ones that have been identified as excess to Forest Service needs and which can be sold under existing authorities, Block said.

More than half of this 60,000 acres is contained in two tracts in California and New York. The public will be asked to provide its views on the desirability of selling these lands. Environmental assessments will be prepared to determine the potential impacts of selling these two tracts. Studies may be prepared for some other areas as well.

About 17 excess administrative sites totaling 40 acres already have been reported as surplus to the General Services Administration as a

first step in disposing of them through sales. None of these lands, however, has yet been sold, Block said.

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BRUCELLOSIS INDEMNITY RETURNS TO FLAT RATES

WASHINGTON, Nov. 26—Effective immediately, indemnities paid for cattle destroyed because of brucellosis will no longer fluctuate with market prices, but will be returned to a flat-rate basis, a U.S. Department of Agriculture official said today.

The new maximum rate will be \$50 for non-registered beef cattle and bison, \$250 for registered animals and non-registered dairy animals and \$50 for certain calves. Comments will be accepted on the new rates until Jan. 25.

"We needed to return to flat rates for several reasons, including the need to reduce costs," said John K. Atwell, deputy administrator of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

Before the new fixed rates were put into effect, indemnity rates were generally higher and adjustable according to fluctuating market prices and regional price differences.

"Adjustable rates did not work well in practice and frequently resulted in over compensation," said Atwell.

The amount formerly paid for nonregistered beef cattle was \$62. Rates for non-registered dairy cattle varied from state to state. Rates for registered cattle were based on a percentage of appraised value less actual slaughter price.

Atwell said the new rate schedule will allow paying indemnity to owners of bison—American buffalo—destroyed because of brucellosis.

"This will correct an inequity," Atwell said, "since buffalo are subject to the same disease control measures as cattle.

"Only a few buffalo are found infected yearly—200 as compared with 120,000 cattle—so the added cost will be minimal. These animals are often located in areas otherwise free of cattle brucellosis and we need to eliminate these potential sources of disease spread."

Atwell said the new rates for cattle will be the same as before June 27, 1980, with two exceptions. More will be allowed for dairy cattle—

\$250 instead of \$150. And more will be allowed for female calves under six months of age nursing infected dams—\$50 instead of \$25.

Comments on the indemnity change should be sent to the deputy administrator, USDA, APHIS, Veterinary Services, Room 805 Federal Building, 6505 Belcrest Road, Hyattsville, Md. 20782.

Notice of the action is scheduled to be published in the Nov. 26 Federal Register.

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BLOCK ANNOUNCES PROCEDURES FOR COLLECTING DAIRY DEDUCTIONS

WASHINGTON, Nov. 26—Secretary of Agriculture John R. Block today announced the procedures the U.S. Department of Agriculture will use to collect the 50 cents per hundredweight from the proceeds of milk marketed by the nation's dairy farmers beginning Dec. 1.

In fulfilling the intent of Congress expressed in the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1982, this money will go to the Commodity Credit Corporation to offset part of the cost of dairy product purchases CCC makes under the dairy support program.

Block said the procedures, which will be administered by USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, are:

- Those who pay the dairy farmers for their milk—in most cases milk handlers and dairy cooperative associations—will make the deductions and pay the CCC. Dairy farmers who sell their milk directly to consumers will be responsible for making their own payments to the CCC.

- Payments are due on the date final payment is made to the dairy farmer. The first deductions will apply to milk marketed in December and payments will be due during January 1983.

- Those responsible for making payments will be required to file a brief report to USDA on the milk volumes for which they have made deductions.

The Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1982 is designed to reduce the cost of the dairy program which has exceeded \$2 billion each year for the last two years. Under the act, the secretary of agriculture is

authorized to collect 50 cents per hundredweight of milk marketed if CCC dairy surplus purchases are expected to be above 5 billion pounds milk equivalent for the marketing year. Since purchases are expected to be well above this level, the secretary is implementing the first phase of this program Dec. 1.

The law also provides for a second phase of this program, Block said. It could go into effect April 1, 1983—the earliest date authorized by Congress—if estimated CCC purchases are at least 7.5 billion pounds milk equivalent during the marketing year. This phase provides for deducting an additional 50 cents per hundredweight from dairy farmers' proceeds but calls for a refund to dairy farmers who have reduced their milk marketings by a specified amount, Block said.

No decision has been made concerning the second phase of the plan, but USDA currently anticipate CCC purchases will exceed 7.5 billion pounds.

Block said that while he offered a completely different, simpler and effective solution to the dairy surplus problem for the last two years, Congress and the dairy leadership have refused to accept his proposal and Congress has instead adopted the current program.

Block said while he strongly prefers another approach, he feels he must act responsibly and administer this program to fulfill the spirit and intent of Congress.

Payment procedure regulations for the first phase will be published in the Nov. 30 Federal Register. Copies also are available from: Dairy Division, AMS, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250.

USDA officials are sending a copy of the regulations, a letter explaining the plan, a sample report form and instructions on completing it to the people who will be making the deductions.

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BLOCK TO PARTICIPATE IN OECD MEETING IN PARIS, DEC. 2-3

WASHINGTON, Nov. 26—Secretary of Agriculture John R. Block will participate in the ministerial-level meeting of the Organization for

Economic Cooperation and Development's committee for agriculture in Paris on Dec. 2-3.

Block will chair a session on agricultural trade.

The 24 member countries also will discuss agricultural policy adjustment and world food security. The meeting is expected to consider problems caused by agricultural export subsidies and protectionism and U.S.-European Community trade issues.

Created in 1961, OECD succeeded the Organization for European Economic Cooperation which had successfully administered the Marshall Plan. Among OECD policy objectives is the expansion of world trade on a multilateral, non-discriminatory basis.

